

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL MASTER

Gemmell v. Hawkins – C. A. No. 16-350 WES

Report (#12) to the Court

This Report is filed pursuant to Section IV.A.4 of the Order Appointing Special Master. My activities in October are set forth in the attached time sheet.

In my last report, I stated that there remained three technological issues that arose with respect to the worker inbox, all of which related to the assignment of tasks shown the screen of the inbox of the eligibility technicians (“ETs”). In August, September and October, there were three updates that addressed these problems, and all the updates appear to have been successfully implemented. What remains now are a combination of occasional “tweaks” – or enhancements - to the program as well as continued training of the ETs and their supervisors on the use of the program in order to achieve the 96% timeliness standard.

The timeliness results for September were: 91.6% for expedited applications and 91.7% for non-expedited applications. Approximately 3900 applications were processed in September. These percentages do not take into account the most recent updates, and they should improve for October. Whether DHS will reach the 96% standard is not clear, but DHS is examining closely those applications that are not timely processed to determine the cause of untimeliness. On a daily basis, DHS performs an analysis of overdue or aging applications with Deloitte. The principal cause of untimeliness at this point appears to be worker error, not technological problems, and DHS is taking steps to implement procedural changes and training to close the gaps. In many cases, the applications are not actually untimely, but that does not show up in the percentages. DHS expects that with increased familiarity with the

new worker inboxes, the number of errors should decrease. A chart of the progress of timely processing is attached to this report.

On October 3 in mid-afternoon, I visited the Providence DHS office, the busiest office in the agency, with Courtney Hawkins, Director of DHS. I noted that the line in the outer office was down to about 10 persons (there were no lines out the door) and that there was a much-improved orderliness in the outer office. There is a triage desk and there are dedicated windows for SNAP applicants. There were also far fewer applicants in the inner office waiting to see a technician. When times are busiest at certain times of the month, there is a special adjacent service area set aside exclusively for SNAP applicants. While there is more work to be done, the majority of customers are able to resolve their issues within 30 minutes. The effects of the recommendations of the business consultant appear to have taken hold. I also observed an ET supervisor using the new (color-coded) worker inbox (“dashboard”) that allows the supervisor to track the status of applications for which he/she is responsible. She was generally satisfied with the dashboard but had recommendations as to how to improve it. DHS is continuing to work with Deloitte to implement enhancements for the system.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Deming E. Sherman

Special Master

November 1, 2018

cc Counsel of Record (by email)

